

whatsoever in DeSimone that its text chat arrangement can be applied to a system having multiple servers in *different* communities.

As described in the background of the present application, conventional on-line chat systems are limited in that the chat sessions must occur on a common server, such as a chat server, or on common servers provided by one service provider. If servers are associated with different communities (such as communities provided by different service providers), then an effective chat system is generally not available. Nothing in DeSimone even remotely suggests providing a text-based messaging session in a network having a plurality of communities each including a different server. Although reference is made to multiple interconnected servers by DeSimone, such multi-server networks maintain, or have ready access to, lists of participants and other message handling information. This suggests that the servers are associated with the same service provider and thus is part of the same community.

Therefore, DeSimone does not teach or suggest the invention of claim 1. Claim 19 is similarly allowable over DeSimone since DeSimone does not teach or suggest an interface unit (associated with a *first one of a plurality of communities*) to receive a contact request (to establish a text-based messaging session) over a network from an entity associated with *another community*, with the entity not logged on to the server associated with the first community. As further recited in claim 19, a controller sends a notification to the destination terminal of the contact request and receives an indication from the destination terminal of acceptance of the contact request.

With respect to independent claim 20, DeSimone does not teach or suggest a system in a *first community* associated with a first service provider to receive a request from a subscriber in a *second community* associated with a second service provider, with the request indicating a desired text-based messaging session with a subscriber in the first community.

With respect to independent claim 31, there is no teaching or suggestion within DeSimone of a server having an interface to receive a request from a first community to establish an interactive, text-based chat session between a first terminal in a first community and a second terminal in a second community, with the server also having a controller to process the request on behalf of the second terminal in the second community to establish the interactive, text-based chat session.


For the foregoing reasons, all independent claims are allowable over DeSimone. Since independent claim 19 is allowable, dependent claim 29, which is withdrawn (subject to a restriction requirement) should be re-joined back into the present application.

Dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as those set forth for independent claims. Additionally, the dependent claims add additional elements that are further not disclosed or suggested by DeSimone.

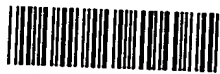
Allowance of all claims is respectfully requested. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 20-1504 (NRT.0010US).

Respectfully submitted,

Nov. 5, 2002
Date



Dan C. Hu, Reg. No. 40,025
Trop, Pruner & Hu, P.C.
8554 Katy Freeway, Ste. 100
Houston, TX 77024
713/468-8880
713/468-8883 [fax]



21906

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE